DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 936 CS 503 994

AUTHOR Taufen, Phyllis M.
TITLE Public Speaking: Revisited.
PUB DATE Oct 82
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the North Idaho Council of English (Coeur d'Alene, ID, October 15-16, 1982).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Techniques; Communication Apprehension; Elementary Secondary Education; Learning Activities; *Public Speaking; *Speech Communication; *Speech Instruction; *Speech Skills; Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

There is a simple but effective process for developing public speakers in elementary and junior high schools. After discussing the importance of effective speaking, the teacher puts a topic sentence, on favorite desserts for example, on the board or overhead projector and students think of their favorite desserts and some related words and phrases. Three students state their choices aloud while the teacher writes them down. The class then reads the opening sentence, the three students again state their choices, and the class reads the closing statement. The speech is complete without the risk of failure that gives students speech anxiety. Students will then be ready to prepare their own "dessert" speeches, which they can rehearse, then read aloud over several days, moving gradually from their desks to the front of the classroom. As public speaking becomes more complex, students may carry small cards with an opening statement, five or six key words, and a closing sentence to serve as an outline. To develop audience rapport, students judge each speaker according to a simple chart for immediate feedback. This simple speech format can build students' confidence until they are ready to share more complex experiences with their peers. The format can also be adjusted to fit curriculum goals and individual class objectives and is suitable for social studies, science reports, book reviews, and current events. After a few years of consistent practice, elementary school students speak easily for 3 to 5 minutes. Written composition also improves as students become proficient at organizing ideas. (HTH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED222936

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Public Speaking: Revisited

Phyllis M. Taufen, SNJM, MA
Director of Writing Lab and Instructor
English Department

Gonzaga University
Spokane, Washington 99258

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Phyllis M. Taufen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS503994

Public Speaking: Revisited

"There are three reasons why I like peanut butter! First, ... Second, ... Third, ..." Sound humdrum? Stilted? Non-creative? Perhaps. But with a beginning, three reasons, and an ending, an elementary student takes the first step toward being an effective Public Speaker. And this first step opens the way to organizing material, building confidence, speaking without a written text, and developing audience rapport.

How can Public Speaking be revisited in this day of fast-paced media, computers, satellites, and micro-chips? Who has the patience to teach, much less listen to twenty-five students drone on about the Battle of Saratoga, the early life of Huckleberry Finn, or how the circulatory system works? Teachers and students alike wait impatiently for that magic word, "Finally," signaling the end of each talk. As a consequence, Public Speaking, an excellent way to learn essential skills, is merely tolerated or slowly abandoned. This paper will outline one simple but effective process for developing Public Speakers in elementary and junior high schools. Differences between oral and written communication, logistics for organizing ideas, some classroom procedures, and an expanded use of Public Speaking will be discussed.

First, a look at oral and written communication seems in order. In oral presentations, the speaker controls the pace, the listener must grasp the ideas, and visual aids such as

paragraphing and punctuation are usually absent. Listeners may not stop the flow of ideas, ask for a re-play, or listen at a later time. Communication depends on and is controlled by the speaker. On the other hand, written communication gives power to the reader who controls the pace, may re-read, or may put the article aside to be finished at leisure. Visual aids are integral to and assist the communication of written ideas. Consequently, with these differences in mind, a speaker must organize ideas logically, speak clearly, and build a rapport that facilitates understanding. No "re-listening" is possible, for speaking is usually a one-time process.

With these challenges, a speaker, whether six years or sixty, must develop skills that further rather than impede instant communication. However, since most skills cannot be developed independently, the process can begin by focusing on organization and by building confidence.

Thus, after discussing with students the importance of effective speaking and creating a desire to speak well, show how the opening sentence, commonly known as the thesis, helps the listener focus on the topic being presented. When "favorite dessert" is the topic, thinking about baseball, ice-skating, or T.V. shows must cease! Put a topic sentence on board or over-head projector: "If you want to make me happy, please pass the dessert!" Then ask students to silently think of their favorite. "Apple pie?" Add an adjective. "Hot?" Maybe a phrase. "With a scoop of vanilla ice cream?" Ask three students to clearly state their favorite dessert with adjectives and descriptive phrases. Three more! Write on board or over-head: "Yes, if

you want to make me smile, please pass the dessert!" Now, put it all together and have the class read the opening sentence, a designated three students say, "I'll take. . . ," while naming their favorite dessert, and the class read the closing statement.

There it is--a speech Aristotle would approve--with a beginning, a middle, and an ending, not to mention a general topic statement, three proofs or examples, and a summary! Students have not left the security of their desks, stood nervously before an audience, or risked failure. Yet all have heard a topic sentence, examples to prove the thesis, and a closing statement. After this ten-minute introduction, most are ready to prepare their own "Favorite Dessert" talk.

Because practice is essential, students rehearse their "talk" at least six or seven times when alone and then with a parent or friend. Any audience deserves careful preparation! Next day, the topic and closing sentences are placed on the board and students may read ,if necessary, their first and last statements while supplying their original middle sentences of "First, I'll take . . . . Second, I'll take . . . . Third, I'll take . . . ." Praise is essential! And since the objective is to share favorite desserts in a logical way, the majority of students reach the goal and deserve commendation.

To continue the process of developing confident speakers with simple outlines, have each student give the "Favorite Dessert" talk over the course of several days. Before all have completed this first presentation, give the topic for the next Public Speaker event. Having five to ten students speak each day, an activity that takes only five to ten minutes, quickly

moves into a routine where students see speaking as integral to language arts classes. Reinforce, grade, praise--whatever evaluative tool encourages and excites.

With the organization of ideas and some confidence established, students no longer speak securely in their desks, but stand near "home base." For the second or third oral presentation, volunteers share ideas from the front of the classroom. Further confidence comes when a podium is available or a teacher's desk provides a "space" for speaking. Having students walk in groups of four or five to face the audience also builds security. Extra students stand aside, facing the class and getting used to being on stage, while one student shares ideas from the speaker's "space." Grouping also speeds the sharing process and eliminates the extra time needed for individuals to walk to and from the podium.

When Public Speaking becomes more complex, students may carry small cards with the opening statement, five or six key words, and closing sentence written as an outline. Again, because of intense practice beforehand, students continue to "talk" their ideas rather than read a text.

Finally, developing audience rapport, another essential skill or objective, can be furthered through the simple Judge Sheet. Criteria developed in the language arts class through group prioritizing, committee selection, or individual research gives a basis for judging. Among the many options, this simple form has proven most successful:

Judge _____

5 = Excellent 2 = Fair
4 = Very Good 1 = Poor
3 = Good

SPEAKER	Is Prepared	Speaks Loudly and Clearly	Looks at the Audience	TOTAL
1. Jean Smith	4	3	4	11
2. Leroy Roberto	5	4	4	13
3. Susan Shelan	4	5	5	14

Students judge each speaker and prepare to give immediate feedback after writing the individual scores. Usually one student evaluates the speaker, always giving the best points achieved. This oral evaluation develops another mode of communication--speaking directly to a person and giving feedback in complete sentences.

With this format--a beginning topic sentence, three or four middle examples, and a closing--along with a bit of confidence, students are ready to share even more experiences with their peers. Topics such as "When I have free time, I do things I enjoy," "Come to my room and I'll show you some of my favorite things," and "If I had three wishes, I'd make some changes" lead into organized and lively sharing.

Teacher evaluation, use of Judge Sheets, building a positive and supportive atmosphere, and other classroom logistics can be adjusted to fit the curriculum goals and individual class objectives. Limited space prevents more details; however, the

basic format given above can easily be adjusted to meet diversified needs.

In addition, expository topics can be expanded into descriptive talks or narratives. A favorite haunt, the bustling grocery store, or a neighborhood street give data for describing a scene. Equally so, stories of how a lesson was learned, the greatest thrill when ten years old, or the worst embarrassing moment make narration come alive. In both description and narration, unity can be learned through spatial or chronological relationships. Using transitions such as "beyond the corner house, across the river, after that day, the next morning, or then" gives glue that binds ideas into a logical whole.

This same formula for speaking can be used in social studies, science reports, book reviews, and current events. "Since the Industrial Revolution, three eras of manufacturing can be discussed." "Good nutrition demands good habits." "Sue, the main character in this book, showed exceptional courage in several crises." From primary grades to the junior high level, students learn to share information, ideas, and opinions in an organized and confident manner.

When a school faculty decides to improve Public Speaking and chooses the simple goals stated in this paper, the results can be astonishing. After several years of consistent practice, elementary students easily speak for three to five minutes, present humorous monologues, give persuasive arguments, and defend fiery debate positions. Also, written composition improves as students become proficient in organizing and presenting ideas orally.

It may be a long process from the primary student's opening

sentence of "My dog is a perfect pet" to the junior high student's "Batik involves complicated steps and a carefully planned procedure." However, every effective Public Speaker begins with organizing ideas, building confidence, and developing audience rapport. And when these skills are learned, few notes are needed to "talk the talk."

Look again at that peanut butter! What are those three reasons?

BEGINNING IDEAS:

Narration	A Frightening Experience Thrill of a Lifetime When I Was Four Years Old The Day I . . .
Exposition	I Believe . . . Everyone Should . . . Nothing Beats Pizza!
Description	My Most Beautiful Spot The Ugliest Place I Know My Uncle Joe

OTHER IDEAS:

1. How To's
2. Commercials
3. Happiness Is
4. Misery Is
5. A Day in the Life of . . .
6. My Favorite T.V. Show
7. Poetry
8. Monologues
9. Debates